



Giant Spin Art

Written By: Bob and Pete Goldstein

TOOLS:

- [Dremel rotary tool \(1\)](#)
- [Drill with screw bit \(1\)](#)

PARTS:

- [1x6 wood boards 24" long \(4\)](#)
For the frame
- [1x4 wood board 30" long \(1\)](#)
- [Small wood block about the width of your drill \(1\)](#)
- [5/16" spike T-nut \(1\)](#)
- [5/16" bolt 1½" long \(1\)](#)
- [Loctite threadlocker glue \(1\)](#)
- [1½" wood screws \(14\)](#)
- [Canvases Pre-stretched 20" \(1\)](#)
Round canvases can be found online at misterart.com for about \$10 each, shipped in packs of 6.
- [Paint \(1\)](#)
We used water-based acrylic paints in squirt bottles.
- [Cardboard \(1\)](#)
- [Electric drill \(1\)](#)
Corded with a lock to keep the trigger held in, and a way to control speed.

Ours has a variable speed wheel on the trigger.

- [Remote switch extension cord \(1\)](#)

SUMMARY

Spin art is a children's activity, often found at school fairs. Kids drop paint onto a spinning square of paper, making beautiful, colorful patterns. As adults, we imagined it would be fun to scale this up, and up, and up. Our friends envisioned injuries, or worse — an elaborate, spinning contraption flying high into the sky and disappearing.

So we tried it, and after burning out the motor from a box fan, we realized that a corded power drill would work better. Corded power drills are cheaper than battery-operated drills, and they typically have greater torque. Many even have a speed knob on the trigger, offering more control.

Step 1 — Building the Frame



- We mounted our drill pointing straight up, by sandwiching it between two 2' planks and then screwing 2 more 2' planks onto the ends, to make a stable H-shaped frame. To keep the drill from sliding, we also screwed a small wood block against its handle at the bottom. The drill sits snug in the frame, and it can be lifted out easily.
- We locked the drill's trigger in the On position, and then plugged the drill into a switched extension cord so we could turn it on and off remotely.

Step 2 — Attaching the Canvas



- To make an adapter for attaching the drill chuck to the canvas, we drilled a pilot hole through the center of a 30" plank and hammered in a 5/16" spike T-nut. We ran a 5/16" bolt through the nut and added a drop of Loctite to make it hold. To strengthen the drill's grip on the bolt, we used a Dremel to shape it like a hexagonal drill bit.
- Then we drilled a wood screw through each end of the plank, to point up when the bolt points down. We screw the screws farther to attach them to a canvas frame and then flip the assembly over and clamp the bolt in the drill chuck.

Step 3 — Spinning the Canvas

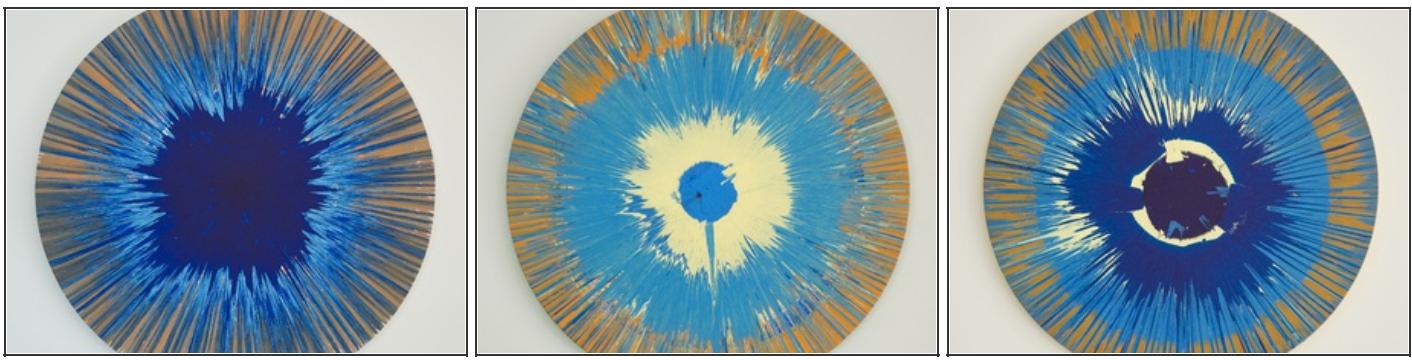


- We've found that any canvas spins pretty smoothly as long as it's centered on the adapter. For canvases more than 2'-3' across, just make sure not to spin for more than a few minutes at a time, to avoid burning out the drill's motor. We put a ring of cardboard around the setup and some paper on the ground so that high-speed paint wouldn't cover the neighborhood.

Step 4 — Warnings

- Watch your knees! And don't lean over the device so far that you fall onto it.
- Stop the device immediately if it ever tips over. We stake ours to the ground.
- Keep electrical plugs out of the area where the paint is; don't mix electricity and liquids.
- To minimize risk of electrocution, plug the device into a ground-fault circuit interrupter outlet. These are often labeled GFI or GFCI, with test and reset buttons on them.

Step 5 — The Results



- Giant spin art has been fun to do with friends. We usually spin 20" round canvases, but sometimes try larger ones. Our record size so far is 4'×3'. Surprisingly, just about every canvas comes out great.
- Bob and Pete Goldstein are brothers who rarely build anything based on their half-baked ideas.

This project first appeared in [MAKE Volume 25](#).

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